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day. She knew she would never get his equal, or at least any one that she loved so well. At last the kemp day came, and with it all the pretty girls of the neighbourhood, to Shaun Buie's. Among the rest, the two that were to decide their right to him were doubtless the handsomest pair by far, and every one admired them. To be sure, it was a blythe and merry place, and many a light laugh and sweet song rang out from pretty lips that day. Biddy and Sally, as every one expected, were far ahead of the rest, but so even in their spinning that the reelers could not for the life of them declare which was the best. It was neck and neck and head and head between the pretty creatures, and all who were at the kemp felt themselves wound up to the highest pitch of interest and curiosity to know which of them would be successful.

The day was now more than half gone, and no difference was between them, when, to the surprise and sorrow of every one present, Biddy Corrigan's *heck* broke in two, and so to all appearance ended the contest in favour of her rival; and what added to her mortification, she was as ignorant of the red little woman's name as ever. What was to be done? All that could be done was done. Her brother, a boy of about fourteen years of age, happened to be present when the accident took place, having been sent by his father and mother to bring them word how the match went on between the rival spinsters. Johnny Corrigan was accordingly dispatched with all speed to Donnel M'Cusker's, the wheelwright, in order to get the heck mended, that being Biddy's last but hopeless chance. Johnny's anxiety that his sister should win was of course very great, and in order to lose as little time as possible he struck across the country, passing through, or rather close by, Kilrudden forth, a place celebrated as a resort of the fairies. What was his astonishment, however, as he passed a whitethorn tree, to hear a female voice singing, in accompaniment to the sound of a spinning-wheel, the following words:

"There's a girl in this town doesn't know my name;  
But my name's Even Trot—Even Trot."

"There's a girl in this town," said the lad, "who's in great distress, for she has broken her heck and lost a husband. I'm now goin' to Donnel M'Cusker's to get it mended."

"What's her name?" said the little red woman.

"Biddy Corrigan."

The little woman immediately whipped out the heck from her own wheel, and giving it to the boy, desired him to bring it to his sister, and never mind Donnel M'Cusker.

"You have little time to lose," she added, "so go back and give her this; but don't tell her how you got it, nor, above all things, that it was Even Trot that gave it to you."

The lad returned, and after giving the heck to his sister, as a matter of course told her that it was a little red woman called Even Trot that sent it to her, a circumstance which made the tears of delight start to Biddy's eyes, for she knew now that Even Trot was the name of the old woman, and having known that, she felt that something good would happen to her. She now resumed her spinning, and never did human fingers let down the thread so rapidly. The whole kemp were amazed at the quantity which from time to time filled her pirn. The hearts of her friends began to rise, and those of Sally's party to sink, as hour after hour she was fast approaching her rival, who now spun if possible with double speed on finding Biddy coming up with her. At length they were again even, and just at that moment in came her friend the little red woman, and asks aloud, "is there any one in this kemp that knows my name?" This question she asked three times before Biddy could pluck up courage to answer her. She at last said,

"There's a girl in this town *does* know your name—  
Your name is Even Trot—Even Trot."

"Ay," said the old woman, "and so it is; and let that name be your guide and your husband's through life. Go steadily along, but let your step be even; stop little; keep always advancing; and you'll never have cause to rue the day that you first saw Even Trot."

We need scarcely add that Biddy won the kemp and the husband, and that she and Shaun lived long and happily together; and I have only now to wish, kind reader, that you and I may live longer and more happily still.

Men no more desire another's secrets, to conceal them, than they would another's purse, for the pleasure only of carrying it.—*Fielding*.

## WHAT ARE COMFORTS?

BY MARTIN DOYLE.

A FEW months ago I had the honour of passing a day in England with a gentleman of considerable property, who took the trouble of showing me a very extensive park and tillage farm near his manor-house, around which every thing indicated good taste and abundant wealth in the possessor.

It has rarely been my good fortune to view more beautiful scenery than that which the demesne of F—— possesses within itself, or a place in which it would be more difficult to find a want, either in the nature or extent of the landscape: yet as we walked along, and were admiring some undulating land, about six miles distant, Mr F—— suddenly stopped, and remarked "that he had long wished for that hill, in order to plant on it a clump or two of trees, as a picturesque termination to his prospect: it would be such a comfort to have it! I have offered forty years' purchase for that land," said he; "but the possessor is an obstinate fellow, and won't part with it."

I ventured to suggest that he should endeavour to prevail upon the owner of the hill to plant the desired clumps; but to this he gave a decided negative, saying, that it would be very uncomfortable indeed to be indebted to such an unaccommodating person for any thing.

At dinner, the lady of the house, after asking me if I had been pleased with Mr F——'s farming, and proposing some other questions of that nature, which she considerably accommodated to my capacity, in order to relieve me if possible from the embarrassment natural to a man of my station in life when sitting at table with his betters, and surrounded with luxuries quite new to him, inquired with great suavity of manner if I did not think that the owner of the hill property was very "tiresome" in refusing Mr F—— the little comfort on which his heart was fixed; and in the course of the dessert informed me that the governess was a very "comfortable" person to have about children: that the King of the French had no "comfort" in his ministers, and must find the attempts upon his life very "tiresome" indeed.

Having got over the dinner business, during which I had been really uncomfortable from the dread of doing something very awkward, I became composed and familiar by degrees, and asked questions in my turn; and was assured that there is very little comfort to be had in a mere country life without a first-rate bailiff and gardener, newspapers, new publications, a billiard table, and society of a certain class within visiting distance; that hot baths are indispensable comforts within the house, and that one adjoining the stables is also a great comfort to a hunter after a hard day's work.

It was also among their comforts to have the nursery in a remote wing, where the cry of a child could not reach the seniors of the family in their apartments, and a very great comfort to have a pew in the church with a fireplace in it.

My host, who would not allow me to leave Castle F—— that night, passed much of the evening in reading the papers of that day, standing at intervals with his back to the fire, which comfort he seemed to enjoy extremely, while I threw in a word now and then to him or his lady, to whom I detailed the receipt for making catsup from nettles, as it appears in my *Cyclopædia of Agriculture*. "This economical method of making catsup," she was pleased to say, "would be a great comfort to the poor;" and so it would, as I ventured to observe, if they had any thing to eat that required such sauce.

I was conducted at night to a bedroom, with large mirrors, a pair of wax candles on the dressing-table, a luxurious chair placed opposite the fire, and an immensely high bedstead, curtained with damask satin. Being subject to the nightmare, I mounted this (by a step-ladder) with fear and trembling, lest I should roll out in the night; and the apprehension of this calamity in a strange house, and among great people, kept me from sleeping all night, and rendered me extremely uncomfortable.

I could not help thinking what Mrs Doyle and the children would say if they saw me tucked under such fine bed-clothes, and stretched under such a grand canopy; and to tell the truth, I wished myself safely out of it, and in my own crib at Ballyorley. Yet to the obliging inquiries of my entertainers, on the ensuing morning, "if my bed had been comfortable?" I was unable to say No. But what *are* comforts? thought I to myself all the time. Indeed, the consideration of this question has occupied my mind a good deal since, for I find the notions attached to the term "comfort" are infinitely varied.

When I left Castle F., the weather was cold; I mounted, however, the roof of a coach, and proceeded with many other passengers for Salisbury. We had not gone far when rain fell in torrents, driven by a piercing blast; umbrellas and coats were not waterproof, and when we alighted at the inn-door at Salisbury, there were none of the *outsides* who were not more or less wet and miserable.

Four of us determined to remain at the inn all night; and as we threw off dripping cloaks and mufflers, and approached a blazing fire in a small snug parlour, where a cloth, and knives and forks, and a plate-warmer, gave indications of a hot dinner, we all agreed that this was true comfort; nor was this opinion changed when soon afterwards we sat in dry clothes by a fire, with—but let no one mention this to Father Mathew—a hot tumbler of brandy punch before each of us.

But though we were unanimous on this occasion, I soon found that the utmost difference of opinion prevailed on other points, as to real comfort. One of the gentlemen, who sat at my right hand, whispered to me in confidence that there was no comfort in a single life, that his house was cheerless, his servants great plagues from want of a mistress to keep them in order, and his furniture going to destruction. My companion on the other side, whose wife I understood to be a virago, gave a groan, shook his head two or three times, and whispered to me, "If the gentleman wishes to enjoy comfort, he will leave matrimony alone."

Having occasion to hire a good brickmaker to bring over with me to teach my workmen how bricks ought to be made, I went into several cottages inhabited by labourers in Shropshire. In the first into which I went, and this was very well furnished, were a man and his wife at breakfast. They had tea and sugar, a large white quartern loaf, and some crock butter. Very good, said I to myself; these people are exceedingly comfortable. The man was a common field labourer, and earned twelve shillings a-week the year round. They had a piece of meat every day at dinner with their greens or potatoes, and bread into the bargain, and bread and butter in the evening.

There stood a little boiler in a back kitchen, which I understood was for brewing small beer occasionally; and nothing seemed wanting in the way of comforts to this couple.

I was not offered a chair, nor did either of them ask me to sit down, but they answered such questions as I put to them.

"I'm glad to see you so comfortable," said I. "May I ask if you have any others in family?"

"No, we're only ourselves. We ha'n't no children, boys nor girls," said the woman in rather a dissatisfied tone.

"Well, then," I rejoined, "you have the less cause for anxiety. Children are uncertain blessings, though certain cares; and depend upon it, you are much better off than many parents who have them."

"That is very true," replied the woman; "but still a child or two would be a great comfort to us in our old age."

Their next-door neighbours had four noisy children and the same weekly wages. Here I was told by the parents, who were also at a tea breakfast, that their childless neighbours were far better off than they, as they had comforts beyond their own reach. "We can't drink no beer," said the man—(this was a lie, by the way, for he spent a shilling every week in the jerry-shop, to the real discomfort of his family), "nor eat no good vittals, nor have nothing comfortable."

In short, in every house into which I went there was something wanting to constitute comfort.

In the dwelling of an artisan it was the want of a hot joint and a pudding on Sundays, or the substitution of an occasional dish of potatoes for bread or meat; and sometimes it was the house itself which was uncomfortable from some cause or other. One or two of the very poorest families which I visited were disposed to think they would have comforts in the Union house which they could not afford under their own roofs, although those who were within that establishment declared that they had no comforts at all.

An old woman in one of the cottages complained to me that John Snook had stolen one of her geese when it was just ready for the market, and that it would be a great comfort to her if John Snook could be taken and transported.

A parish schoolmaster assured me that he had no perfect comfort except in vacation time; the boys when at school were so unruly that he had little peace or comfort except by flogging them. The boys, on the other hand, derived no comfort from being flogged.

A sick man told me that a bowl of wine whey would be of

the greatest comfort to him; and a woman recovering from fever, whose bed linen had been just changed, spoke within my hearing to her sister of the comfort which she felt in consequence.

I hired a brickmaker in the course of that tour, and set off with him for Ireland. When I reached Liverpool, a steamer was about to leave for Wexford. Into this I entered. The steward showed me a comfortable berth, in which I was dreadfully sick during a passage of twenty hours, loathing the sight and smell of food; yet he often came to ask me if there was any little comfort in the way of meat and drink that he could supply.

A few days after I had reached home, I went into the cottages of my own workpeople, and there the distinction between them and those of the corresponding class in England in their estimate of what is comfortable, struck me very forcibly.

Although the principle which leads most of us to desire something more than we possess in the way of comforts, as they are called—but of extreme luxuries in many instances—operates in the Irish labourer as among nine-tenths of his fellow men, his notions of what is comfortable are truly moderate.

One of my ploughmen was at breakfast as I walked into his house. He and his family were seated round a table—it had no cloth I must admit—helping themselves at pleasure from a dish of stirabout, and dipping each spoonful into a mug of milk. This I thought a far more suitable breakfast for them than weak and adulterated tea and white bread, at a much greater expense than an oatmeal diet.

I asked Pat what he would think of bread and tea every morning and evening, to which he very sensibly replied that it wasn't fit for him nor the likes of him! but that a cup of tea and some bread would be very agreeable to them every Sunday evening, especially so to his old mother, who would think a little tea now and then a great comfort. As to meat, he would like that once or twice a-week, but was not so unreasonable as to wish for it oftener. As long as the potatoes and the milk stood to him, he had no reason to complain!

Then what are comforts? I again asked myself.

Returning home, I called at the house of a dying widow whose character I had long respected. She was very poor, but always contented, though she could hardly be said at any time to have enjoyed what are considered the blessings of this life. I asked her if she wanted anything that I could send her—any little comforts. The word excited her languid spirit. "I have wanted for nothing," said she, "that was really needful for me; and now, O God! thy comforts delight my soul." After a little time she said, "Blessed be the God of all comfort;" and again, "I am filled with comfort."

These words gave another turn to my thoughts: the subject was placed in a new point of contemplation. Let my reader now in his turn, entering into the widow's application of the term comfort, ponder upon the question, "What is comfort?" and I am much mistaken if he does not discover that it is something which the world cannot give.

**MALARIA.**—It is not a mere theory, but a well-founded opinion, that all the destructive epidemics that have afflicted this globe have had their origin in malaria, which in a cold climate has produced typhus fever, in a more temperate one plague and yellow fever, and within the tropics cholera, each modified according to the idiosyncratic state of the sufferers. A few examples may be enumerated. Ancient Rome was subject to frequent epidemics, generally caused by inundations of the Tiber; but in the year 81 of the Christian era, after a severe rainy season succeeded by intense heat, the mortality was so great as to carry off 10,000 citizens daily. It is narrated by historians that the year 1374 was marked by a comet, by excessive rain and heat, and succeeded by the most dreadful mortality that we have any record of, and by which two-thirds of the human race were destroyed in a very brief period; many places were entirely depopulated; 20,000,000 died in the east in one year, 100,000 perished in Venice, 50,000 were buried in one graveyard in London, grass grew up in the streets of cities hitherto most populous, and people fled in boats and ships to sea, regardless of property and friends.

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